

Los Angeles Times

**Wildfires
Die Down
but Official
Voices Fears**



Millie Wilson

The Los Angeles Times Series

*Front cover,
detail and back
cover:*

Part 1, page 19,
Wednesday, June 3,
1987, "Barbara
Jamison, facing
camera, hugs
daughter Nancy at
the site of the elder
Jamison's destroyed
house in Pebble
Beach."

WILDFIRES DIE
DOWN BUT
OFFICIAL VOICES
FEARS

*acrylic on canvas,
1988, 26 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 25"*

Millie Wilson

March 9-April 16, 1989

Nancy Gonchar, curator

University
Art Museum

State University
of New York
at Binghamton

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Gonchar, Nancy, 1952-

Millie Wilson, the Los Angeles Times series.

Catalog of an exhibit held at the University Art Museum, State University of New York at Binghamton, Mar. 9-Apr. 16, 1989.

1. Wilson, Millie. Los Angeles Times series — Exhibitions. 2. Women in art — Exhibitions. 3. Women in advertising — Exhibitions. 4. Feminism and art — United States — Exhibitions. 5. Photography of women — Exhibitions. 6. Los Angeles Times — Exhibitions.

I. Wilson, Millie. II. State University of New York at Binghamton. University Art Museum.

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The Los Angeles Times Series

This exhibition of works by L.A. based artist Millie Wilson is the second in the annual series, Current Events, which explores current issues in art, especially cultural theory, photography, and the politics of representation. An integral part of the series is the documentation of the exhibitions and the accumulation over time of a collection of catalogs that reveal the various investigations of artists who share a common approach to art production. This approach can be characterized as a commitment to a critique or analysis of the culture in terms of such issues as gender, race, class, and sexuality.

This catalog presents several representations for the viewer to consider. These include a statement by the artist, an essay by the curator, and reproductions of the paintings. We invite viewers to find their own position.

This is a painting installation of eighteen works, each of which is based on a page of the *Los Angeles Times* and composed of three or four canvases. The largest canvas in each work is the size of the newspaper page (22 $\frac{3}{4}$ " \times 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ "). It functions as a map locating any photographs found on the particular page determining that work. The yellowing of the newsprint over time is the basis for the color, which varies slightly from work to work. The black and gray rectangles locate the photographs and details respectively. Each work includes a canvas which contains the following: the newspaper section number and page number, the date, day of the week, the caption of the photograph(s), and the headline. These texts are silkscreened on canvas following the original page layout. The smaller canvases are paintings of photocopy enlargements of details of the photographs. Their sizes are determined by the limits of standard photocopy enlargement and their locations are determined by the map of the page. The paintings of details are slightly colorized and include the machine tracks of the photocopy and printing processes, to effect a delay between the brushstroke and what is depicted.

I do not want to theorize this work in advance of the viewer, but I want to indicate that various meanings accrue in the series, not the least of which is a rational demonstration of subjectivity. I chose pages which contained photographs of women. I used only the news and sport sections because women so seldom appear in those sections. I had in mind a diverse and partial inventory. I selected details which were compelling to me. After three years of using news photographs as subject matter for painting, I became interested in doing work which would demonstrate my methods more literally, and would allow for more play among issues of painting, photography, and representation.

Millie Wilson 1988

Many contemporary painters who examine the politics of representation critique the authority that the practice of painting has enjoyed throughout western civilization. This poses an interesting dilemma when one recognizes that conventional painting practice continues to prevail in the art world. Additionally, painters have had to assess their desire to produce engaging and meaningful artworks in a world saturated with visual images and dominated by technological advancements that make even the camera look like a primitive imaging device.

In this context, the work of art, and the painting in particular, has become a highly charged arena open to diverse interpretations. Postmodern strategies include an investigation and recycling of photographic images produced in the media. The profound impact of photography on the art world cannot be overemphasized. As Douglas Crimp writes, "Not only has photography so thoroughly saturated our visual environment as to make the invention of visual images seem an archaic idea, but it is clear that photography is too multiple, too useful to other discourses, ever to be wholly contained within traditional definitions of art. Photography will always exceed the institutions of art, always participate in nonart practices, always threaten the insularity of art's discourse."¹

Millie Wilson is a painter and feminist who engages with the contradictions prevalent in the practice of painting by investigating the depiction of women in a newspaper. **The Los Angeles Times Series** consists of a suite of 18 paintings conceived as a whole. The series asks: in what ways does the media construct women? As mothers, domestic workers, athletes, criminals; as executives and politicians? What kinds of images appear? How frequently? How are they cropped and in what sections do they appear? What is the impact of their placement on the page and their relationship to the text and other photographs? The majority of images depicting women are advertisements: how does this affect our view?

Newspapers have immense authority and we tend to accept editorial choices as representative of the significant events of the day rather than as the opinions of individuals. This is the stuff of which ideology is made. It's not always apparent that what

we read and see in the newspaper represents, at best, only a partial inventory of national and international news. A number of artists and writers, among them Herb Schiller, Barbara Kruger, Sarah Charlesworth, and Esther Parada have commented on the media's skewed presentation of the news and the enormous importance of the context in which stories are presented and their relationships to each other on the page.

Not only do women appear in the news less frequently than do men, but women serve as editors-in-chief of only two major U.S. newspapers, and only a small percentage (12.4%) of the senior editors are women. There are also far fewer female than male photographers. Indeed, a NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund survey shows that only 10% of *New York Times* front page articles are written by women.² These factors are significant and indicate the numerous and insidious ways that women's experience is both controlled and diminished.

Wilson, working from a feminist perspective, takes as the subject of her paintings the *Los Angeles Times*, scanning the daily paper for images of women. She finds a cowgirl, grandmother, mother and daughter, athlete, zookeeper, terrorist, social worker, welfare recipient, model, and construction worker. These represent both familiar characterizations of women as well as exceptions to the stereotypes. But the exceptions are still contained within limits defined by the patriarchal context of the newspaper and appear as oddities rather than legitimate options for women. There are no policy makers, executives, politicians, scholars, or artists in these paintings. Neither the stereotypes nor the exceptions illuminate the complexity of women's experience.

Wilson contrives a pseudoscientific system to construct her paintings, giving the impression of an objective and rational analysis. One is struck by the abstract appearance of the overall display, where canvases are arranged on the wall in ordered patterns reminiscent of corporate graphs. The blank, yellowed background, a reference to aging newsprint, is all that remains of the news. Wilson's deliberate effacement of the print and thus the content/context of the page obliterates the expected meaning of both the news-

paper page and of the photographs. Each photograph is represented only as a blank and somber shadow, a black rectangle on the central canvas, with a gray rectangle denoting Wilson's selected cropping. All that remains for the viewer to analyze is a part or detail of the photo, and its caption and headline. In many cases the partial image or small remaining portion of the photograph emphasizes a gesture, the relationship between people within the frame, or an object. The detail becomes a new picture constructed by Wilson providing an alternative interpretation of the women depicted.

Although Wilson removes her women from the patriarchal ground of the newspaper, there is still ample evidence, in the headline and caption, of the original context, and the new painted ground in which they now interact is not neutral. The yellowed painted field represents both an unprinted newspaper waiting for new copy and a reference to abstraction. Wilson confounds our reading by cropping or choosing the details in such an idiosyncratic way that they are rendered awkward and incomplete. There is a tension between the painted detail and the text (headline and caption) which is left intact. And it is in this conjunction of cropped image and complete text that I think Wilson's conceit becomes subversive. As one moves from the image to the text and back, one tries to assess whether the illustration any longer matches the caption and headline. The text, without a complete picture for reference, loses its descriptive characteristics and authority. Although the black and gray rectangles give us some clues to the original boundaries of the picture, they don't provide enough information to reconstruct the initial story. In the end we are left to our own devices. Wilson's project asks us to reconstruct and reinvent women in the news. Her investigation pushes us past the limiting view imposed by the newspaper's ideology, and seeks to suggest a diversity of female experience while at the same time recognizing the complexity of gender construction.

Nancy Gonchar

NOTES:

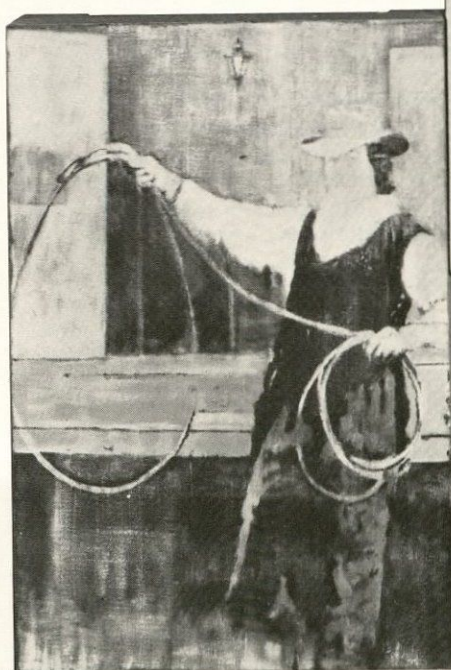
1. Douglas Crimp, "Appropriating Appropriation," *Image Scavengers: Photography*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1983, p. 33.

2. Marie Shear, "Some News is Good News," *The Women's Review of Books*, Vol. VI, No.4, January 1989, p. 7.

Newsmakers

Not for Just Another Pretty Face

Judy Gardner: Looking for a few bad women.



Part 1, page 2, Friday, November 27, 1987, "Judy Gardner: Looking for a few bad women."
NEWSMAKERS: NOT FOR JUST ANOTHER PRETTY FACE
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 36¼" × 24½"



Los Angeles Times

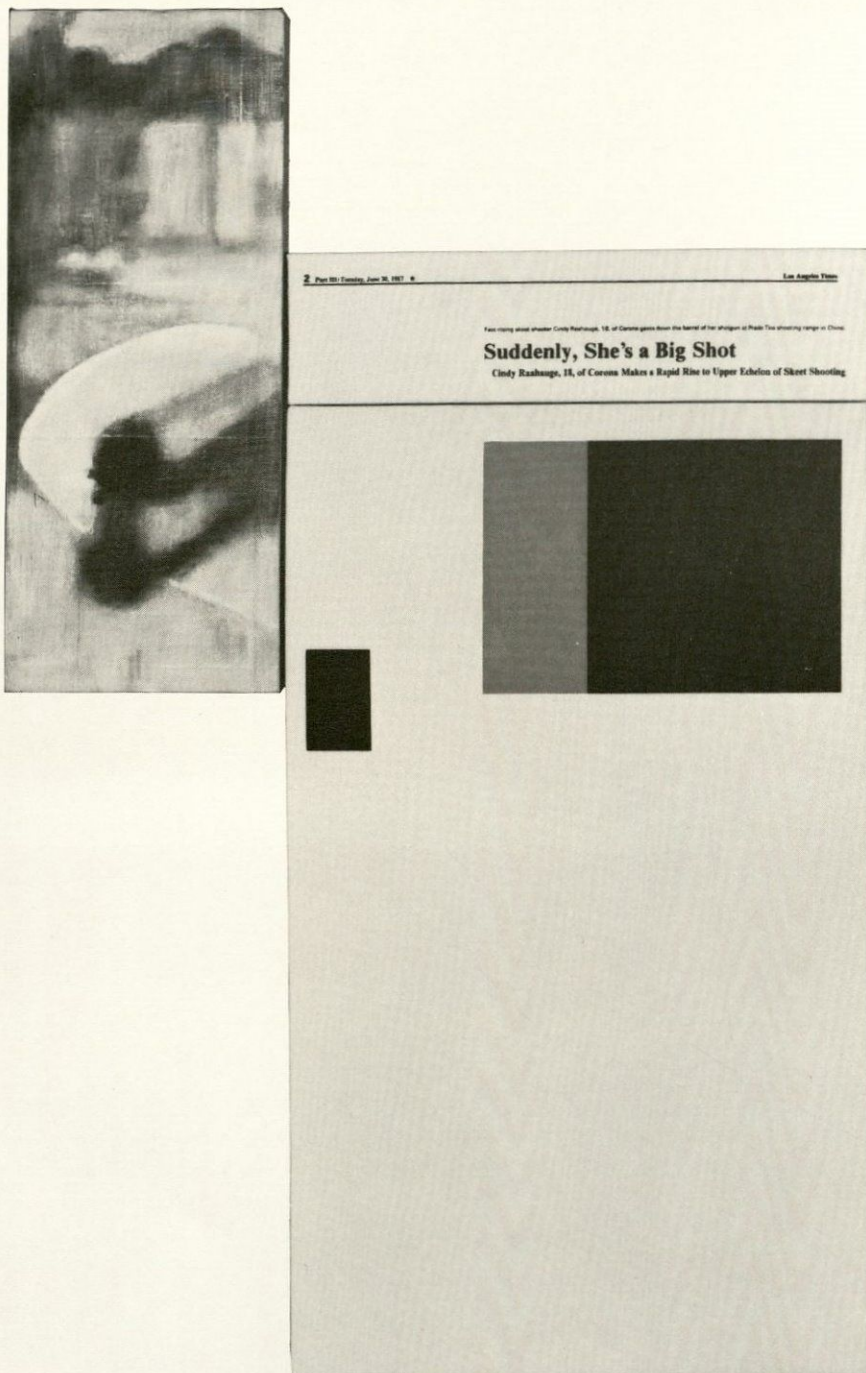
Wednesday, June 3, 1987 Part 1 19

Wildfires Die Down but Official Voices Fears

Barbara Jamison, 74-year-old, high school teacher at the site of the elder Jamison's destroyed house in Pebble Beach.

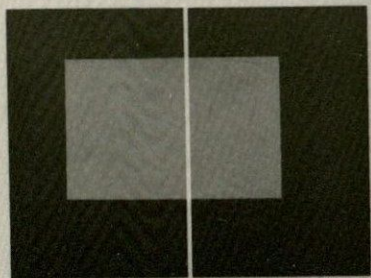


Part 1, page 19, Wednesday, June 3, 1987, "Barbara Jamison, facing camera, hugs daughter Nancy at the site of the elder Jamison's destroyed house in Pebble Beach." WILDFIRES DIE DOWN BUT OFFICIAL VOICES FEARS
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 26 3/8" x 25"



Part 3, page 2, Tuesday, June 30, 1987, "Fast-rising skeet shooter Cindy Raahauge, 18, of Corona gazes down the barrel of her shotgun at Prado Tiro shooting range in Chino." **SUDDENLY, SHE'S A BIG SHOT**
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 32 1/8" × 20 3/8"

Manila contrasts—Model at a luncheon fashion show in the five-star Manila Hotel and scavengers at the Smokey Mountain garbage dump illustrate the extreme wealth and poverty of Manila, one of Asia's most vibrant cities (Story on Page 1)



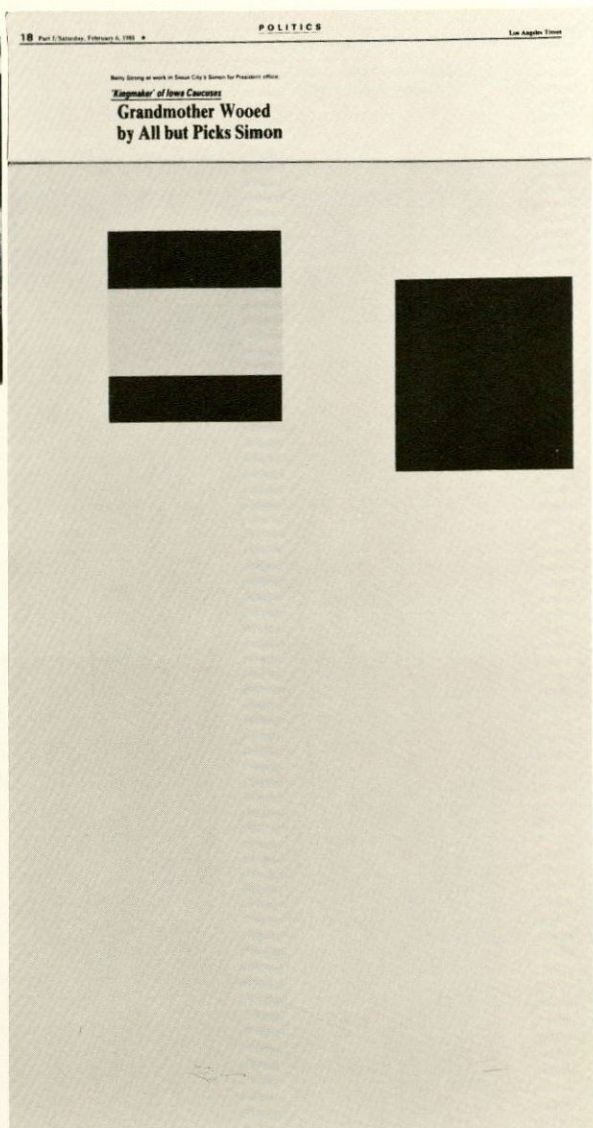
Part 1, page 2, Wednesday, February 17, 1988, "Manila contrasts—Model at a luncheon fashion show in the five-star Manila Hotel and scavengers at the Smokey Mountain garbage dump illustrate the extreme wealth and poverty of Manila, one of Asia's most vibrant cities (Story on Page 1)
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 26 3/4" x 29"

Blind Woman, Bloodied in Bus Scuffle, Ignored by All

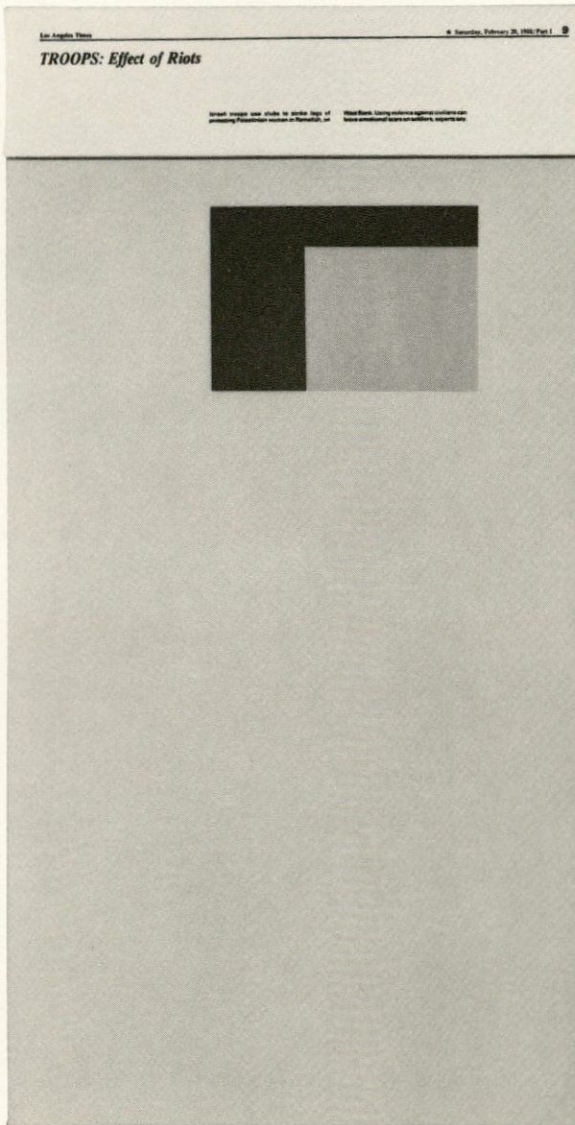
A bruised Millicent Collinsworth
swept aside for other victims



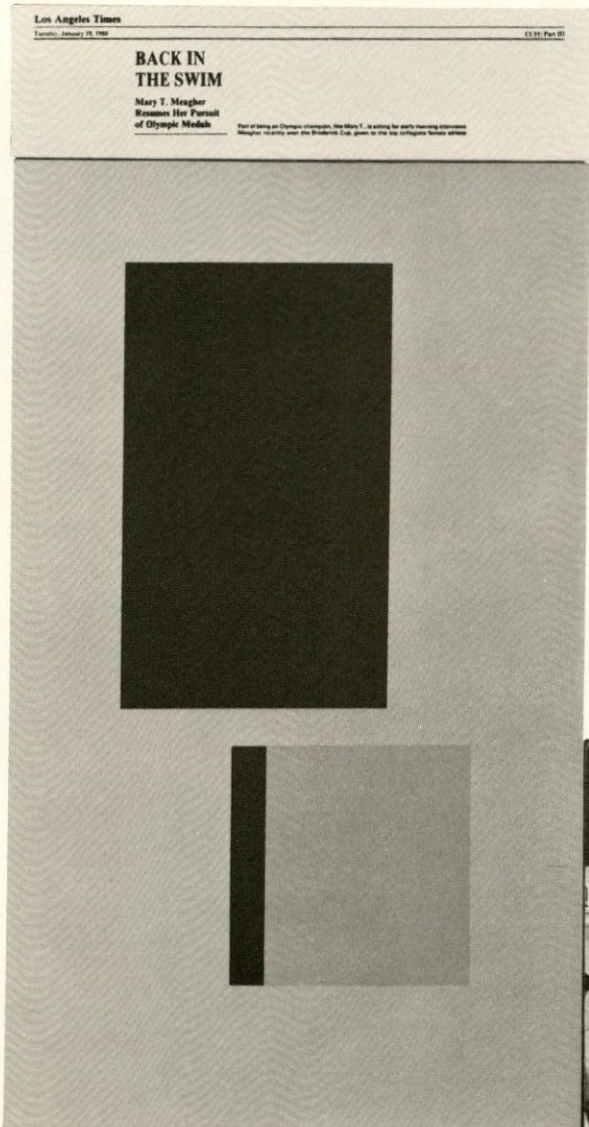
Part 1, page 1, Wednesday, June 3, 1987, "A bruised Millicent Collinsworth with her dog, Eeyore."
BLIND WOMAN, BLOODIED IN BUS SCUFFLE, IGNORED BY ALL
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 35¾" × 19¼"



Part 1, page 18, Saturday, February 6, 1988, "Betty Strong at work in Sioux City's Simon for President office." KINGMAKER OF IOWA CAUCUSES: GRANDMOTHER WOOED BY ALL BUT PICKS SIMON
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 26 $\frac{3}{8}$ " \times 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ "



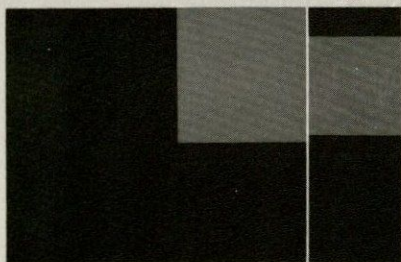
Part 1, page 9, Saturday, February 20, 1988, "Israeli troops use clubs to strike the legs of protesting Palestinian women in Ramallah, on West Bank. Using violence against civilians can leave emotional scars on soldiers, experts say." TROOPS: EFFECT OF RIOTS
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 27 $\frac{3}{8}$ " \times 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ "



Part 3, page 1, Tuesday, January 19, 1988, "Part of being an Olympic champion, like Mary T., is sitting for early morning interviews. Meagher recently won the Broderick Cup, given to the top collegiate female athlete." BACK IN THE SWIM. MARY T. MEAGHER RESUMES HER PURSUIT OF OLYMPIC MEDALS

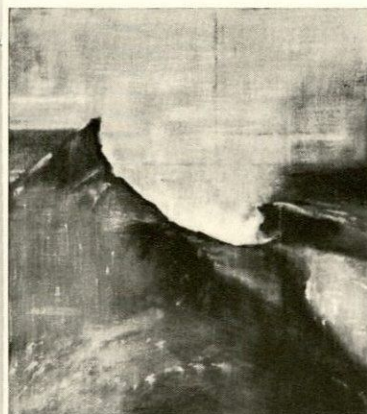
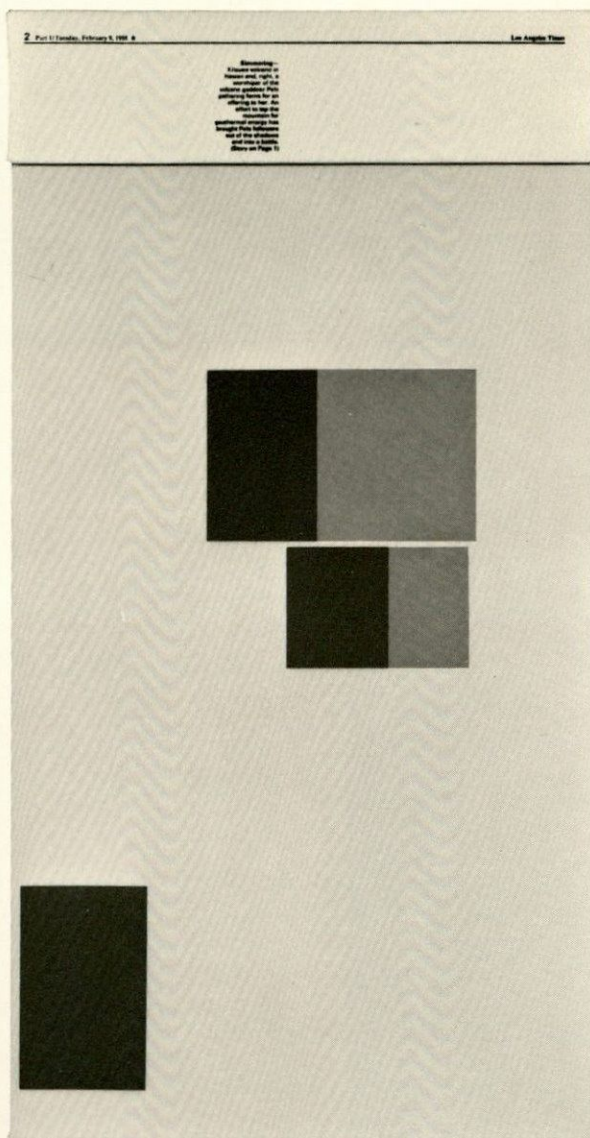
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 26 $\frac{5}{8}$ " \times 25 $\frac{1}{8}$ "

Monkey business—Zookeepers Russ Smith and Laurie Middleton settle a baby gorilla named Kid Kong and Pumpkin, a 2-year-old orangutan, peeking out, into their favorite wagon Thursday for a move to temporary quarters at the Los Angeles Zoo while a new nursery is constructed. At right, Diane Mangalin carries Charlotte, a 1-year-old Siamang monkey, to new home.

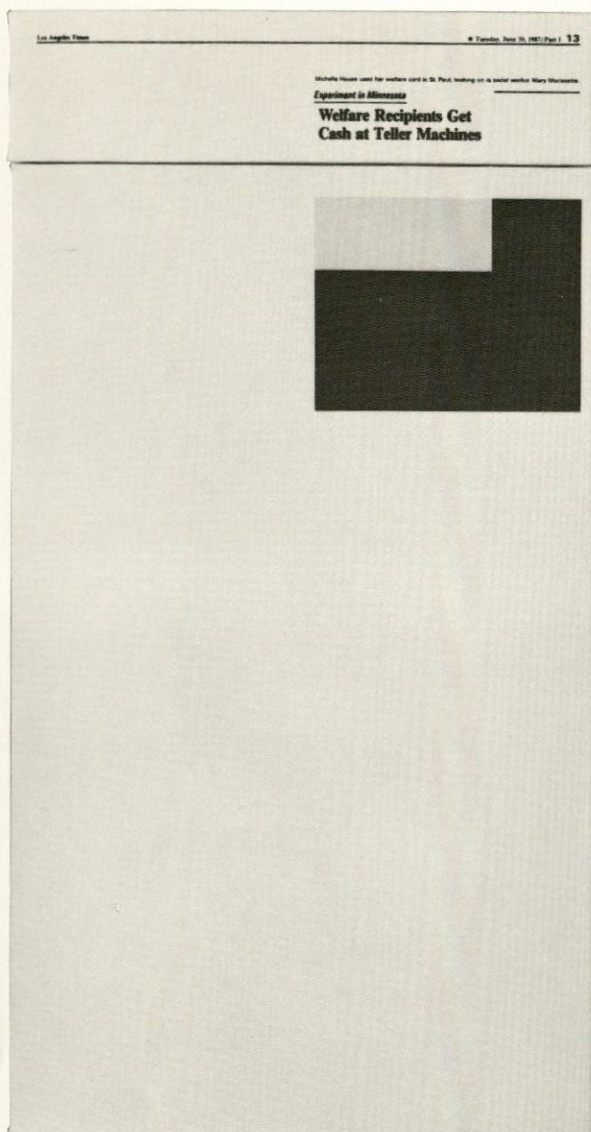


Part 1, page 1, Friday, July 3, 1987, "Monkey business—Zookeepers Russ Smith and Laurie Middleton settle a baby gorilla named Kid Kong and Pumpkin, a 2-year-old orangutan, peeking out, into their favorite wagon Thursday for a move to temporary quarters at the Los Angeles Zoo while a new nursery is constructed. At right, Diane Mangalin carries Charlotte, a 1-year-old Siamang monkey, to new home."

acrylic on canvas, 1988, 22¼" × 28⅞"



Part 1, page 2, Tuesday, February 9, 1988, "Simmering—Kilauea volcano in Hawaii and, right, a worshiper of the volcano goddess Pele gathering ferns for an offering to her. An effort to tap the mountain for geothermal energy has brought Pele followers out of the shadows and into a battle." (Story on Page 1)
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 26 $\frac{1}{8}$ " \times 22 $\frac{3}{8}$ "



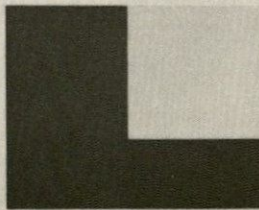
Part 1, page 13, Tuesday, June 30, 1987, "Michelle House uses her welfare card in St. Paul; looking on is social worker Mary Morissette." EXPERIMENT IN MINNESOTA: WELFARE RECIPIENTS GET CASH AT TELLER MACHINES
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 27 $\frac{1}{8}$ " \times 30 $\frac{3}{8}$ "



2 Part 21 (Saturday, January 23, 1988) 4

Los Angeles Times

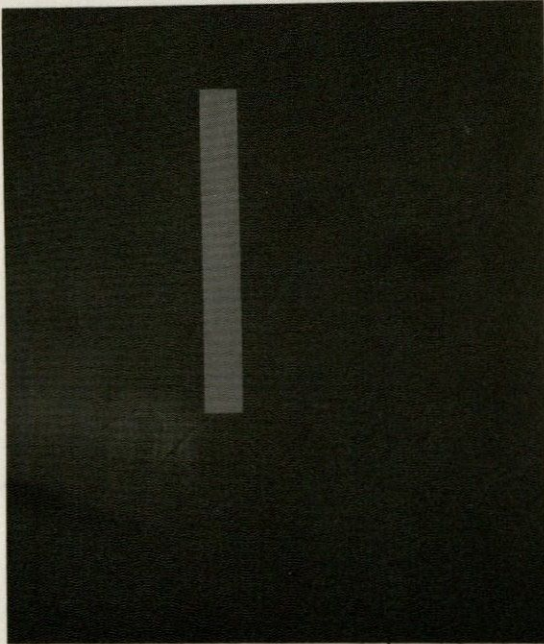
One of the guys—Melanie Dube of Ganus High School in Louisiana becomes the first Louisiana girl to compete against a boys' team after a federal judge allows the 17-year-old senior to play for her school. Above, she helps Ganus score a 1-0 soccer win over Destrehan.



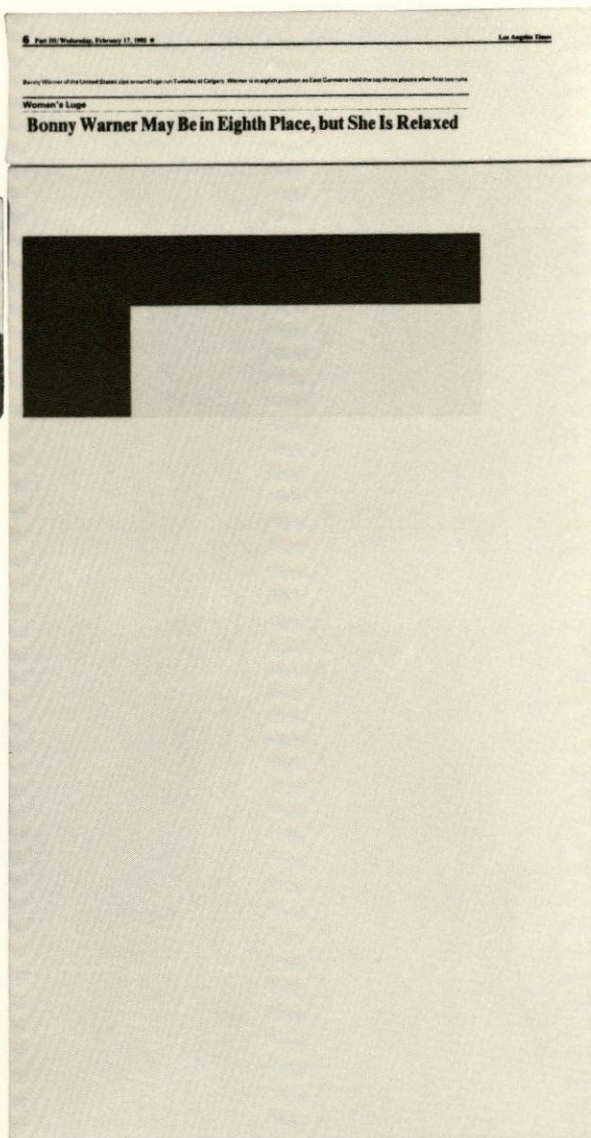
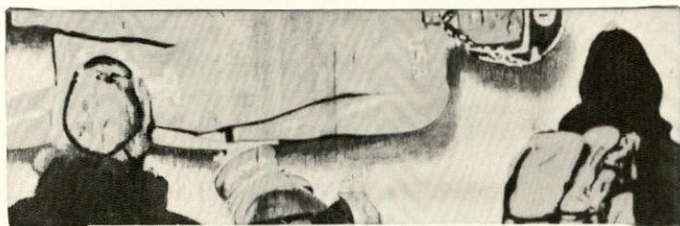
Part 3, page 2, Saturday, January 23, 1988, "One of the guys—Melanie Dube of Ganus High School in Louisiana becomes the first Louisiana girl to compete against a boys' team after a federal judge allows the 17-year-old senior to play for her school. Above, she helps Ganus score a 1-0 soccer win over Destrehan."

acrylic on canvas, 1988, 28 7/8" × 24 1/8"

12 Part 1/Sunday, January 31, 1988 \$
BONES: Officials Are Showing Scant Interest in Town's New 'Treasure'
Continued from Page 1
BALI® SUPPORT BRAS, 30% OFF
 Lowest prices this season! Plus, meet a Bali® fitting specialist at a May Company listed below



Part 1, page 12, Sunday, January 31, 1988, "Carolina Garcia Salas displays giant molar of a mammoth that her son found in their yard." BONES: OFFICIALS ARE SHOWING SCANT INTEREST IN TOWN'S NEW 'TREASURE' BALI SUPPORT BRAS, 30% OFF. Lowest prices this season! Plus, meet a Bali fitting specialist at a May Company listed below.
 acrylic on canvas, 1988, 35½" × 22½"



Part 3, page 6, Wednesday, February 17, 1988, "Bonny Warner of the United States zips around luge run Tuesday at Calgary. Warner is in eighth position as East Germans hold the top three places after first two runs." WOMEN'S LUGE: BONNY WARNER MAY BE IN EIGHTH PLACE, BUT SHE IS RELAXED
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 26 $\frac{5}{8}$ " \times 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ "



Los Angeles Times

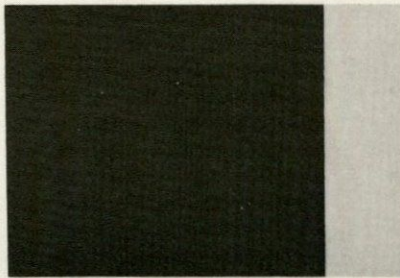
Friday, January 15, 1988, Page 7

115 Died in Nov. 29 Crash

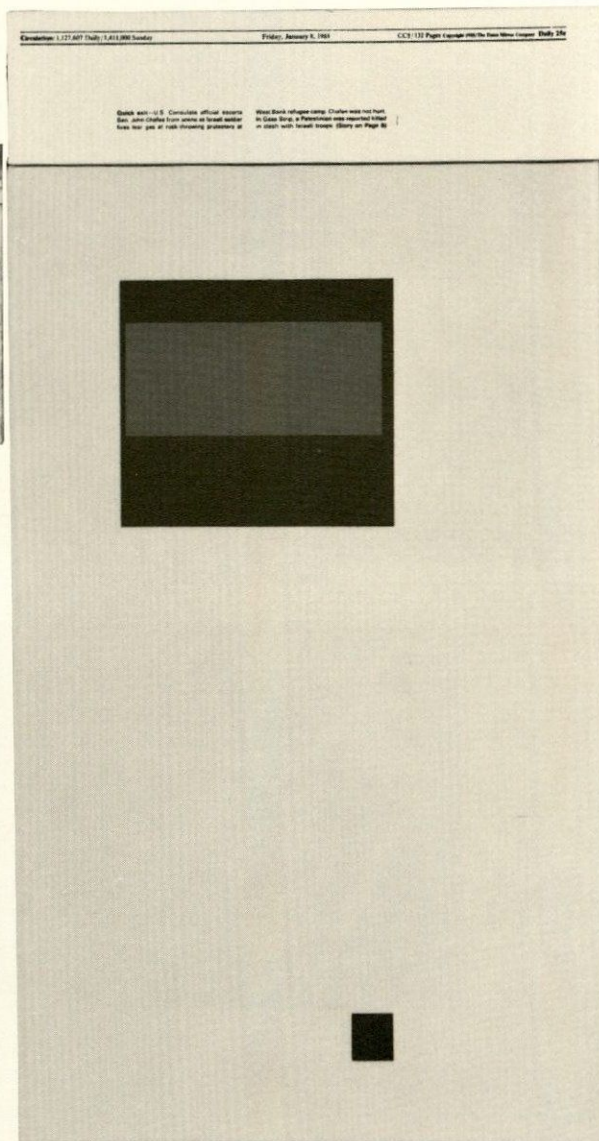
N. Korea Agent Confesses,
Says She Put Bomb on Jet

Kim Hyon Hui, who was arrested in January, said she

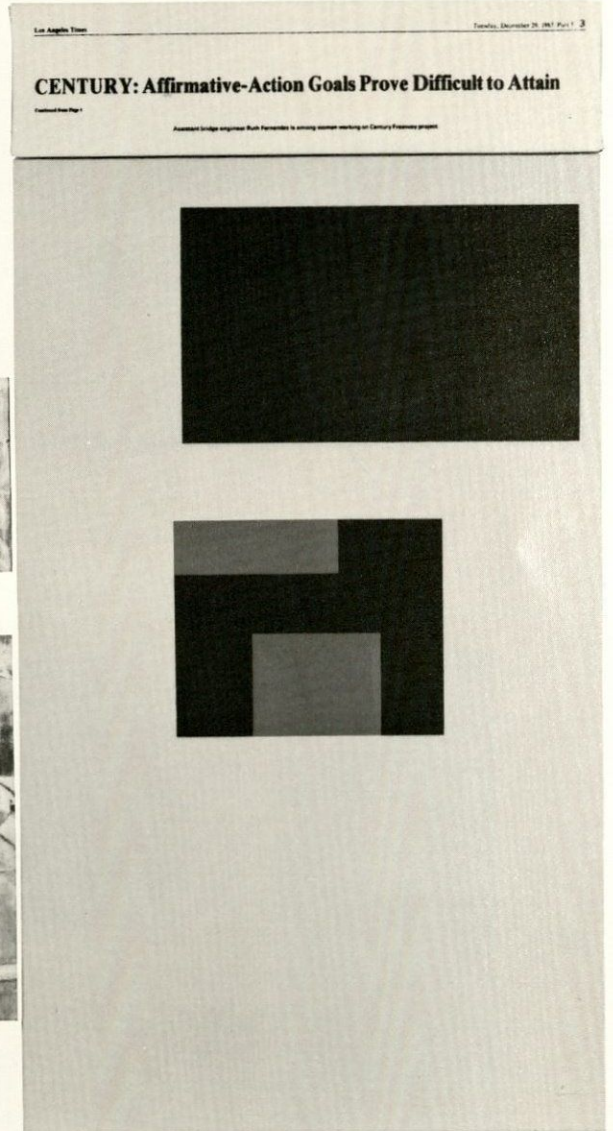
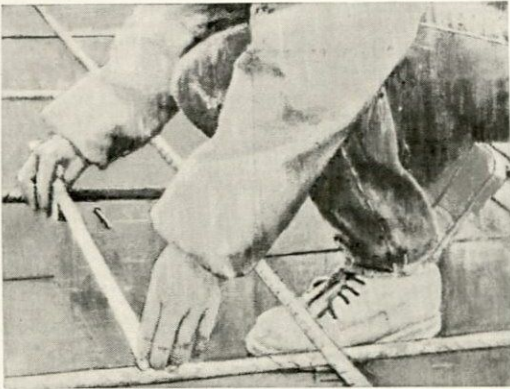
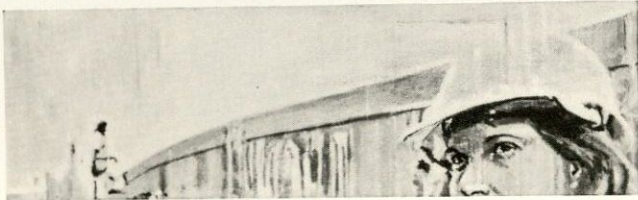
SAVE 20% TO 40% ON
NEWBORN, INFANT AND TODDLER ESSENTIALS



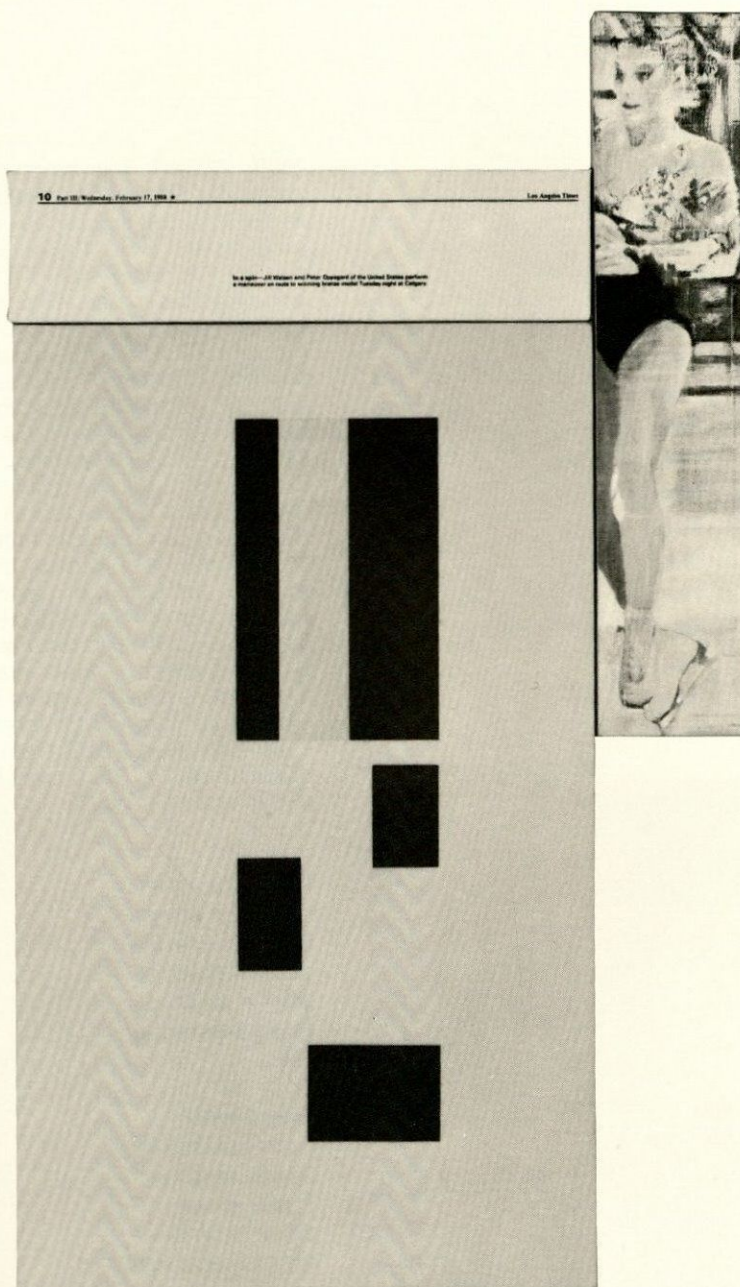
Part 1, page 7, Friday, January 15, 1988, "Kim Hyon Hui as she confessed to blowing up plane."
115 DIED IN NOV. 29 CRASH: N. KOREA AGENT CONFESSES, SAYS SHE PUT BOMB ON
JET SAVE 20% TO 40% ON NEWBORN, INFANT AND TODDLER ESSENTIALS
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 42" x 24 3/4"



Part 1, page 1, Friday, January 8, 1988, "Quick exit—U.S. Consulate official escorts Sen. John Chafee from scene as Israeli soldier fires tear gas at rock-throwing protesters at West Bank refugee camp. Chafee was not hurt. In Gaza Strip, a Palestinian was reported killed in clash with Israeli troops. (Story on Page 8)"
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 26 $\frac{3}{8}$ " \times 30 $\frac{3}{8}$ "



Part 1, page 3, Tuesday, December 29, 1987, "Assistant bridge engineer Ruth Fernandes is among women working on Century Freeway project." CENTURY: AFFIRMATIVE-ACTION GOALS PROVE DIFFICULT TO ATTAIN
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 26 $\frac{3}{8}$ " \times 29 $\frac{1}{8}$ "



Part 3, page 10, Wednesday, February 17, 1988, "In a spin—Jill Watson and Peter Oppegard of the United States perform a maneuver en route to winning bronze medal Tuesday night at Calgary."
acrylic on canvas, 1988, 30 $\frac{3}{8}$ " \times 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Millie Wilson was born in 1948 in Hot Springs, Arkansas. She teaches painting at California Institute of the Arts and is currently acting director of the program in art. Before going to Cal Arts in 1985, she was on the faculty at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her work has been shown extensively at such institutions as Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions; Installation, San Diego; Diverse Works, Houston; Contemporary Art Workshop, Chicago; Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois; and Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin, Texas. In addition her work has been included in major competitions such as *Artquest* '85 and '86 which toured thirty-five museums and galleries throughout the United States, and *International Art Competition* which was shown in twelve museums and galleries in the Los Angeles area. Her work is included in several collections such as: Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana; Auburn Arts Association, Auburn, Alabama; Southwestern Bell Telephone, Austin, Texas; The University of Texas College of Fine Arts Performing Arts Center, Austin. Wilson received a BFA from The University of Texas at Austin in 1971 and an MFA from The University of Houston in 1983.

**Millie Wilson wishes
to thank the Money
for Women Fund, Inc.
and the California In-
stitute of the Arts
Faculty Development
Fund.**

**Nancy Gonchar
thanks Linn Underhill,
Lynn Gamwell, Ken
Aptekar, Eunice
Lipton and the Univer-
sity Art Museum staff.**

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Nancy Gonchar, *Associate Director*

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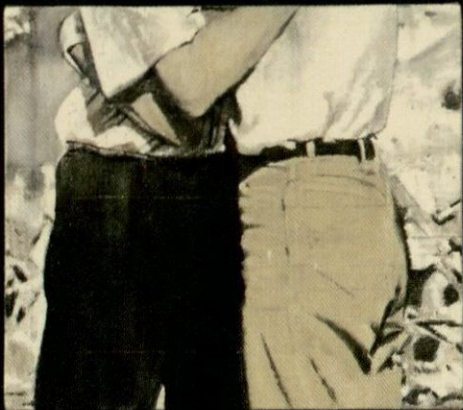
Matthew Zupnick, *Technical Coordinator*

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Design: *Tamara Dowd*

Production: *University Publications*

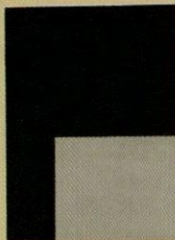


Los Angeles Times

Wednesday, June 1, 1957/Part 1 19

Wildfires Die Down but Official Voices Fears

Barbara Johnson, Tuesday, June 1, 1957, Page 1 of the article
of the article, Johnson's, Wednesday, June 1, 1957, Page 1.



University
Art Museum

State University
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